



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Baxter Ranch Conservation Easement		
PROJECT LOCATION	CAL FIRE's Baxter Ranch Conservation Easement Rockpile Road Geyserville, CA 95448	COUNTY	Sonoma
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Jeff Calvert, State Forest Legacy Program Coordinator I Resource Management		
ADDRESS	CAL FIRE P.O. Box 944246 Sacramento, CA 94244-2460	PHONE	(916) 653-8286

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The subject properties (known as Baxter Ranch) are situated seven miles west of Interstate Highway 101 in the County of Sonoma, California. The Baxter Ranch acquisition is proposed as a Conservation Easement transaction and includes approximately 5,125 acres of private-owned forestlands and oak woodlands. CAL FIRE is acquiring the conservation easement for the purpose of protecting typical forestland uses including wildlife habitat, watershed stabilization and the continued production of forest products. The federal Forest Legacy program was created with clearly delineated open-space conservation goals and objectives to protect environmentally important private forest lands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses pursuant to Section 1217 of Title XII of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. Section 2103C). Congress has awarded a Forest Legacy Program grant to CAL FIRE in order to aid in the purchase of the Easement conveyed for conservation of forested, agricultural and open-space land.

EXEMPTION STATUS

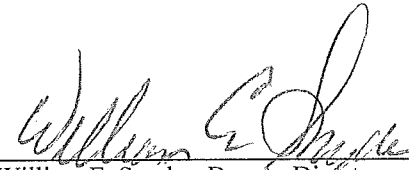
- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 17
Class 25
- §15317 Open Space Contracts or Easements
§15325 Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to
Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical
Resources
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
☐ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Field review by DGS and CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at 1416 9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. This project fits under two classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA: Class 17 (Open Space Contracts or Easements), and Class 25 (Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources). Acquisition as a Conservation Easement through the State and Federal Forest Legacy Programs will protect the area from the encroachment of residential and vineyard development pressure facing Sonoma County today. The Baxter Ranch provides significant wildlife habitat for several threatened and special-concern species. This protection will allow continued traditional forestry, ranching, and hunting activities while affording public recreational and educational opportunities.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING




William E. Snyder, Deputy Director
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

10/20/10
Date